

To: Cal Fed
Rick Breitenbach, Assistant Director
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From: Ellen G. Faulkner
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Re: The Cal Fed Bay Delta Plan. Comment:

No new dams. No new diversions or dikes. No injection into groundwater. Restore proper hydrological function to the Bay Delta. Help the farmers.

Dams: Storage reservoirs back up sediment as well as water and cause the water table to drop below and sometimes above the dam structure. This fact precludes a real solution (dry farming) for a false solution (water storage).

Storage reservoirs are warm water, no matter what snow pack it comes from. The pike minnow finds the dam structure and the warm water very healthy. The salmonids do not. No amount of mitigation can shift that balance back to conditions that nurture salmonids. Historically, mitigations (i.e. hatcheries) have been worse than the man made condition they were designed to mitigate. Agencies continue to have unfounded confidence in fast-profit-driven "science". Stock rescue operations should not be funded. The fish know better than the tinkers.

There seems to be an amazing misunderstanding in this document: that stored water released to augment low water flows will cool the habitat. No. I can't believe I have to explain that these releases only serve to wipe out the cool refugia of the deep pools. As long as people are paid to produce such misunderstandings they will creep into our planning documents as mitigations and nullify our best efforts at real restoration.

Dikes and diversions: The pristine bay-delta contained more food than all the tomato fields behind all the dikes. The old dikes should be slowly phased out along with the old diversions and dams. The bay-delta should be restored to its proper hydrological function.

Injection: Please make your decision re injection after you review the results of Sonoma County Water Agency's injection experiment. Millions of gallons of hydrogen-sulfide spoiled water could not be exported to Marin County but instead had to be pumped into the Laguna, resulting in a vast new supply of contaminated surface water right there in Santa Rosa.

Farmers: Just as you acknowledge that California farmers can learn BMPs regarding pesticides, you should credit them with the intelligence to learn dry-farming methods, dust bowl avoiding, oak saving and riparian zone respecting strategies and to choose crops appropriate to our Mediterranean climate. First the major refugia should be bought and protected, protected even and especially from grotesque DFG electro-fishing studies, and from the environmental consultant firms who have their eye primarily on the dollar; if we've got to stun juvenile salmonids to make a living, we will. If our boss tells us to douse fish in Alka Seltzer, we will. Economics will not allow us to consider the unintended consequences of these actions. Use our tax money to subsidize farmers to not-farm in a 300-foot riparian zone. Give them help to develop sustainable farming methods. In time, subsidize them to not-farm in the floodplains. The fish will come back.

Ellen Faulkner
Earth First!